

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Brookings School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006-2007**

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**Dates of On Site Visit:** October 24,25, & 26, 2006

**Date of Report:** November 3, 2006

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

**Data Sources used:**

Table A  
District screening information  
Comprehensive plan  
Flow through funds application

Screening, evaluation data  
Suspensions/expulsion data  
Statewide test results/participation information  
Professional development information

### Meets Requirements

The steering committee concluded that the Brookings School District does have an established and effectively implemented ongoing child find system. The district has an effective prereferral system.

There are currently three students placed out of district. Parents are reimbursed for their expenses and transportation. There are no costs to the parents regarding the educational program being provided to the students.

The district uses the data from the statewide assessments to plan for instruction and curriculum development. The district uses early release time each Wednesday for professional development, and the district NCA teams are meeting to address issues for math and reading. Special education staff are apprised of student performance on the statewide assessments as well. Alignments of IEP goals and objectives to state content standards is a requirement.

Students identified as performing below proficient are provided the opportunity to attend supported learning settings both during school time (Middle School) and also in after-school “camps” at the elementary level. Special education students also receive additional remedial help in areas they did not score proficient in at the Middle School during their study hall or SIT time. The after school camps are open to all students in the district.

The district develops a district-wide plan for addressing student performance on reading and math goals through its NCA accreditation process. This process requires that the district annually analyze its data, including the disaggregated performance of its special education subgroup and align professional development activities to impact student achievement.

The district monitors performance on the statewide Dakota STEP and Dakota STEP-A as part of this annual review. Efforts recently taken in implementing the SRA system for reading instruction (an evidence-based practice) as an example of this work. Additional tools, such as the Harcourt Intervention series, and online web tools are also incorporated to affect learning outcomes.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practice:**

The monitoring team identified the following as promising practices.

The district uses the data from the statewide assessments to plan for instruction and curriculum development. The district uses early release time each Wednesday for professional development, and the district NCA teams are meeting to address issues for math and reading.

The district develops a district-wide plan for addressing student performance on reading and math goals through its NCA accreditation process. This process requires that the district annually analyze its data, including the disaggregated performance of its special education subgroup and align professional development activities to impact student achievement.

Students identified as performing below proficient are provided the opportunity to attend supported learning settings both during school time (Middle School) and also in after-school “camps” at the elementary level. Special education students also receive additional remedial help in areas they did not

score proficient in at the Middle School during their study hall or SIT time. The after school camps are open to all students in the district.

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle One, General Education.

#### **Out of Compliance: Needs Intervention**

##### **ARSD 24:05:17:03 Annual report of children served**

The monitoring team was unable to validate correct placement on the child count for these students.

Student 43 is reported as a student with a specific learning disability on the child count. The student has never qualified for this disability. The student has received speech services, but has been dismissed.

Student 51 is reported as a student with multiple disabilities; however the evaluation does not support eligibility. The student qualifies for a student with Mental Retardation. However, the speech scores are in the 80's so speech would be a related service, not a primary disability.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

#### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

##### **Data Sources Used:**

B – District Instructional Staff Information  
C – Suspension and Expulsion Information  
E – Enrollment Information  
F – Placement Alternatives  
K – Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information  
L – Complaints  
M – Hearings  
N – Monitoring  
District screening information  
Referral data  
Personal development and training information

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee reported the provision of a free appropriate public education for all children. The data reported to the Department of Education, reflects that the Brookings School District serves students from birth through age 21, meeting the requirements of FAPE.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle Two, Free Appropriate Public Education as meeting the requirements.

## **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

### **Data Sources Used:**

G-Disabling Conditions  
H-Exiting Information  
I-Placement by Age  
J-Placement by Disabling Condition  
L-Complaints  
M-Hearings  
N-Monitoring  
Teacher file reviews  
Surveys  
Form reviews

### **Meets Requirement**

The steering committee concluded the Brookings School District provides appropriate written notice and obtains informed consent before assessments are administered to a child as part of an evaluation or re-evaluation.

All tests have been administered in each child's native language. For example, a preschool-aged student came to the district from China with a speech concern. The district brought a Chinese interpreter to the evaluation to facilitate the assessment. In addition, the district has many Spanish-speaking students and families. Interpreters are brought in regularly to ensure testing and testing results are communicated clearly.

The IEP team considers lack of instruction and LEP when determining eligibility. For LEP students, tests are selected to differentiate basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) from cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Also, tests and subtests are handpicked in an attempt to differentiate student's ability from cultural/linguistic effects. The district uses non-verbal tests, as well as subtests that measure classroom skills such as verbal skills, working memory, speed of processing information, and visual perception skills. Interpretation of scores will take into consideration both the English language skills and the cognitive skills needed to learn in the classroom. As needed, the tests may also be administered in the native language with an assistance of an interpreter.

### **Out of Compliance**

The steering committee concluded the Brookings School District has not consistently documented parental input in the evaluation planning process, functional evaluation is not consistently being documented and used in the IEP process, and transition evaluations are not being consistently completed for students turning age 16. Observations are not being completed for students identified as students with a specific learning disability.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that appropriate written notice and consent is obtained before assessments are administered to a child. The monitoring team was unable to validate tests are given in each child's native language, and lack of instruction is considered in the placement of a child on an IEP.

#### **Out of Compliance: Needs Assistance**

**ARSD 24:05:25:04.02 Determination of needed evaluation data.** As part of an initial evaluation, if appropriate, the individual education program team required by § 24:05:27:01.01 and other individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to interpret evaluation data, determine whether the child has a disability, and determine whether the child needs special education and related services, as appropriate, shall:

- (1) Review existing evaluation data on the child, including:
  - (a) Evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child;

The Monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that the Brookings School District has not consistently documented parental input into the evaluation planning process.

**ARSD 24:05:25:11 Observation for specific learning disabilities.** At least one team member other than the child's regular teacher must observe the child's academic performance in the regular classroom setting.

The monitoring team validates the steering committees conclusion that observations are not being completed for students identified as a student with a special learning disability.

#### **ARSD 24:05:30:04 Prior notice and parent consent**

Informed parental consent must be obtained before conducting a first-time evaluation, reevaluation, and before initial placement of a child in a program providing special education or special education and related services. Parental consent is not required before:

- (1) Reviewing existing data as part of an evaluation or reevaluation; or
- (2) Administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all children unless, before administration of that test or evaluation, consent is required of parents of all children.

#### **24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures**

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following:

- (7) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as applicable, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities;

The monitoring team found that transition evaluations were being completed, but there was no parent permission to administer the assessments. Evaluations are being administered without consent from parents, and evaluations listed on the prior notice are not being given. Written reports are not being

generated on the transition assessment and given to the parents. Functional evaluations were not found in the evaluation process.

**Needs Intervention:**

**24:05:22:03. Certified child.**

A certified child is a child in need of special education or special education and related services who has received a multidisciplinary evaluation and has an Individual Education Program formulated and approved by a local placement committee. Documentation supporting a child's disabling condition as defined by Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act must be maintained by the school district for verification of its annual federal child count. This definition applies to all eligible children ages 3 to 21, inclusive, and to only those children under the age of 3 who are in need of prolonged assistance.

The monitoring team identified the following.

Student 28 was reported as OHI on the child count. In 1991 there was mention of a seizure disorder, and in a 1996 evaluation mention of ADHD. There were no behavior evaluations completed and the report states the student is doing fine on medications.

Students 12 and 13 are reported as Specific Learning Disability. Child 12 has Russian as the primary language and there is no record of evaluations in the native language. Child 13 has Spanish as the primary language. In the report it states part of his difficulties are due to language and lack of schooling. There was no record of evaluating the student in the primary language.

Student 22 qualifies for OT as a related service. The student did not qualify on the Peabody but the school used the VMI for qualification. The VMI can not be used for qualification.

Student 37 is reported as a student with Autism. The last evaluation was completed in 04. The only evaluation given was an achievement evaluation. The last behavior evaluation was in 2001. There was not a comprehensive evaluation completed. There were no evaluations carried forward from the last evaluation.

Student 41 is reported as a student with Autism and does not meet the eligibility criteria for Autism. The student's language skills are in the average range. The parent's reports show a low probability of Asperger's. The teacher report shows a probability of Asperger's. The scores on the behavior scales were not consistent.

Student 7 is reported as a student with a Specific Learning Disability. The IQ score was 125 and an achievement score of 92 was needed for qualification. The student qualifies; however there was no evidence of educational impact for this student. There was only one goal and no skills were listed, only that the student would get an 80% or above on all tests.

Student 15 is reported as a student with an Emotional Disturbance. There are no behavior goals and behavior impedes learning was not checked. The educational impact was not seen for this student.

Student 55 is reported as a student with Autism. The student does not meet the criteria for Autism. The Dr. Report states all PDD have been ruled out. The scores on the BASC were all average. The student's teachers stated how he communicated with classmates. The student does not meet all the prongs for Autism.

## **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data Sources Used:**

L – Complaints  
M – Hearings  
File reviews  
Surveys  
Form reviews

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee stated parents were provided with the parent rights booklet in accordance with regulation 100% of the time. The steering committee noted parents have been fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought and a surrogate parent is appointed if no parent can be identified. Parents of children in need of special education and related services are afforded the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data Sources Used:**

K – Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information  
L – Complaints  
M – Hearings  
N – Monitoring  
File reviews  
Surveys

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee reports policies and procedures are in place to ensure an IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student. Teachers have access to student IEPs. Special education staff ensures the teachers are informed of the students they have who are on IEPs and the modifications/accommodations the IEP requires.

46 of 47 general education teachers responded, noting they have ongoing communication with other staff involved with the education of students with disabilities.

42 of the 47 general education teachers also noted they adapt their general curriculum to meet the needs of students in their classroom.

### **Out of compliance**

The district does not meet the requirements for developing present levels of performance statements within the body of the IEP. The majority of the files reviewed lacked several of the required components, which also impacted the quality of the annual goals being developed by the IEP team.

The steering committee reported the district does not consistently meet the requirements for appropriate plans of transition for students age 16 and older.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees an IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student. Teachers are made aware of all goals and modifications needed in the regular classroom.

### **Out of compliance: Needs Assistance**

**ARSD 24:05:27:01.01 IEP team.** Each school district shall ensure that the IEP team for each student with disabilities includes the following members:

(2) At least one regular education teacher of the student if the student is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment;

Through file reviews and interviews with staff, the monitoring team determined regular education teachers are rarely present at IEP meeting at the high school, and they have not been excused.

### **ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program**

Each student's individualized education program shall include:

- (1) A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including:
  - (a) How the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- (7) A statement of:
  - (a) How the student's progress toward the annual goals described in this section will be measured; and
  - (b) How the student's parents will be regularly informed (through such means as periodic report cards), at least as often as parents are informed of their non-disabled student's progress of:
    - (i) Their student's progress toward the annual goals; and
    - (ii) The extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year.



Through interview and a review of student records the monitoring team was informed progress towards annual goals was not reported in all files at the high school level.

#### **ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program (IEP)**

##### **Present level of academic achievement and functional performance and annual goals**

A student's IEP must contain present levels of academic achievement and functional performance based upon the skill areas affected by the student's identified disability. The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process.

The monitoring team found student files lacked the required content in the PLAAFPs (i.e. specific skill area(s) affected by the student's disability, to include strengths and needs, along with how the disability affects the student's involvement in the general curriculum and parent input). File reviews indicated functional assessments are not being completed to acquire the skill-based information to develop present levels of performance for students eligible for special education services. Annual goals did not consistently specify skills the student could reasonably accomplish within a 12 month period. For example, "Will improve her reading skills as measured by achieving a minimum of an 80% in all content area subjects". "Will complete 100% of assignments in 4 quarters". "Will increase \_\_ reading level by one grade and overall reading and comprehension level by 10%". "Will increase \_\_ Accelerated Reader reading level from a 2.3 grade level to a 3,3 grade level".

#### **ARSD 24:05:27:01.02 Development, review and revision of the IEP- Consideration of Special Factors**

In developing, reviewing, and revising each student's IEP, the team shall consider the strengths of the students and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their student, the results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the students as appropriate, and the results of the student's performance on any general state or district-wide assessment program. The individualized education program team also shall: In the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, if appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, and supports, to address the behavior.

In several student files reviewed, behavioral assessment and/or present levels of academic achievement and functional performance contained information regarding the impact of student behavior on educational performance. However, in developing the IEPs for these students, the team checked "no," that the behavior does not impede learning and did not address strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, to address the behaviors.

**24:05:27:13.02. Transition services.** Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committees conclusion that transition does not consistently meet the requirements for students age 16 and older. There is not a set of coordinated activities in place for students.

## **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data Sources Used:**

B – Instructional Staff Information  
E – Enrollment Information  
F – Placement Alternatives  
G – Disabling Conditions  
I – Placement by Age  
J – Placement by Disabling Condition  
L – Complaints  
M – Hearings  
N – Monitoring  
File reviews  
Surveys

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the school district provides procedures for determining placement options using the continuum of alternative placements. LRE considerations are applied to all students' birth through twenty one.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under least restrictive environment.